



**Hunterdon Central
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To: Docket Management Facility
RE: DOCKET # FMCSA 2001. 9709-24

In order to help the school districts in
the nation keep good drivers + stop training
people for transit + motor coach operations
— the above rulemaking needs to be

School Bus Specific not all-inclusive.

The school bus industry usually offers free training.
Once the applicant is ready the move to nearby
transit operations. We are all struggling to
keep good people. but the transit industry train
their own people.

I tried to respond on the WEB site but
after 6 hour I gave up. Hope this will
count.

Linda Yenzer

FMCSA aims for tougher CDL requirements

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) has issued a proposed ruling that would make the licensing and sanctioning requirements for a commercial driver's license (CDL) stricter.

The proposal includes a rule establishing a new school bus endorsement for CDL drivers (see sidebar). To get the school bus endorsement, drivers would have to demonstrate competency in loading and unloading, emergency evacuation, railroad crossings and more. "It tests potential school bus drivers in the vehicle and for the tasks required of a school bus driver and not for tasks required of a coach or transit bus driver," explained Ted Finlayson-Schueler, executive director of the Pupil Transportation Safety Institute in Syracuse, N.Y.

Prospective school bus drivers, however, would still have to take the written passenger endorsement test, which includes questions on handling other commercial vehicles. Some of the concepts covered on this test, says Finlayson-Schueler, run counter to the lessons taught to school bus drivers. "Obviously, this is a confusing situation for driver and trainer," said Finlayson-Schueler.

The proposed rulemaking does not eliminate the problem many school bus operators were hoping it would solve — applicants accepting free CDL training

from school bus operators and leaving to make more money in the trucking, motorcoach or transit industries. According to Finlayson-Schueler, "If the outcome of this regulation does not plug the hole that employees are driving through to other industries, it will simply have made it more time-consuming for a driver to receive a CDL because they will have to take an additional written test."

In addition to establishing a school bus endorsement, the proposal seeks to increase the number of possible violations against drivers, expand the driver records check to take into account all previously held licenses in all states and disqualify all drivers after their first conviction of driving while suspended or causing a fatality.

The proposed regulation would empower the FMCSA to authorize emergency grants for states that need help in complying with the new requirements. It would also allow the organization to withhold funding from states that do not comply.

The complete proposed rulemaking can be downloaded at *SCHOOL BUS FLEET's* Website. Just go to www.schoolbusfleet.com/govres_5.cfm. Written comments on this proposed rulemaking should be submitted by Oct. 25. Comments may be submitted electronically at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>.

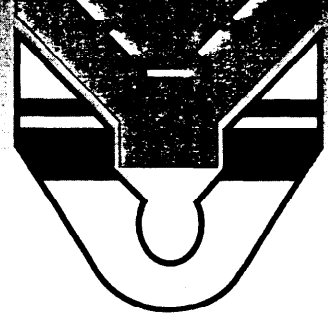
Requirements for a school bus endorsement

According to the FMCSA's proposed rulemaking, an applicant would have to pass the following tests to receive a school bus endorsement:

1. *Passenger vehicle endorsement test.*
2. *Knowledge test* — covering procedures for loading and unloading, emergency evacuation and railroad crossing.
3. *Skills test* — behind-the-wheel test in school bus of the class you will drive.

Exceptions — At the state's discretion, the skills test can be waived if the applicant is a CDL-certified, experienced school bus driver with a good driving record who meets certain criteria outlined in the proposal.

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